STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Description: In Apologetics, the competitor is given four (4) minutes to prepare a speech that defends a tenet of the Christian faith. The speaker crafts a speech to reach those curious, not in agreement, or uninformed with persuasiveness and reasoning.

Goal: Competitors will be motivated to study, articulate, and defend the core issues of their faith in a knowledgeable, sincere, gentle, and respectful manner.

In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you: yet do it with gentleness and respect.
1 Peter 3:15 (English Standard Version)

Key elements/principles:

A. Honor the Lord Jesus Christ as holy.
B. Always be prepared to make a defense (or reply) to anyone
C. Answer the person who asks you for the reason(s) why you have hope.
D. Answer the person who asks you for the reason(s) with gentleness and respect.

Apologetics is about the people who will ask you a question about why you have a hope in this life and the life beyond. Therefore, all the questions have been reworded to reflect this principle while retaining the same meaning.

All new questions will be marked with an asterisk (*) for easy referencing. Total questions number 100.
(2016-2017 season has no new questions)

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STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Category 1: EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

Definitions

1. What does it mean that God is triune? Why does this matter?
2. What does it mean that God is omniscient? Why does this matter?
3. What is the meaning of God's omnipotence? Why does this matter?
4. What is the meaning of the omnipresence of God? Why does this matter?
5. What does it mean that God is eternal? Why does this matter?
6. What does it mean that God is holy? Why does this matter?
7. What is the meaning of the sovereignty of God? Why does this matter?
8. What does the grace of God mean? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Does God reveal Himself to man?
2. If God is holy, why did He allow sin in the world?
3. Can God be both merciful and just?
4. Is the unchanging nature of God essential to who He is?
5. Where did God come from?
6. Why is there suffering in the world?

Statement Analysis

1. How would you respond to someone who told you, "The Old Testament God is a God of hate, while the New Testament God is God of love"?

2. How would you respond to Voltaire's statement: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him"? Voltaire. *Épître à l'Auteur du Livre des Trois Imposteurs*. Paris: Garnier, 1770.

3. What is your response to the following quotation:
   "God set the universe in motion, but He has no interest in it"?

4. What is your response to this question: "If God understands my humanity and sin nature better than I do, why does He still hold me accountable for what I cannot help doing?"

5. How would you respond to someone who told you, "If I'm created in God's image, why aren't I perfect?"

6. How would you respond to someone who asked, "If God is real, why is there evil?"

7. What is your response to this statement: "I have found it an amusing strategy, when asked whether I am an atheist, to point out that the questioner is also an atheist when considering Zeus, Apollo, Amon Ra, Mithras, Baal, Thor, Wotan, The Golden Calf, and the Flying Spaghetti Monster. I just go one god further"? Dawkins, Richard. The God Delusion. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006.

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STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Category 2: SCRIPTURES

Definitions

1. What does the sufficiency of Scripture mean? Why does this matter?
2. What does the unity of Scripture mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does the uniqueness of Scripture mean? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Is the New Testament historically reliable?
2. Is the Old Testament historically reliable?
3. How can the Bible be written by men but also written by God?
4. Can the Bible be trustworthy when it has been translated so many times?
5. Can an "inerrant" book come from errant men?
6. Does science contradict the Bible?

Statement Analysis

1. What is your response to this statement: "The Bible is simply the work of a great conspiracy where people sought to create a religion of their own"?

2. How would you respond to the following criticism: "The Bible supports oppression of slaves and women"?

3. What is your response to this statement: "The Bible is a guidebook. It was never intended to be taken literally"?

4. What is your response to the following observation by Noam Chomsky: "The Bible is probably the most genocidal book in the literary cannon"?
http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/20040917.pdf

5. What is your response to the following Richard Dawkins quote: "The Bible should be taught, but emphatically not as reality. It is fiction, myth, poetry, anything but reality. As such it needs to be taught because it underlies so much of our literature and our culture"? Dawkins, Richard. The God Delusion. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006

6. What is your response to this statement: "The Bible is full of contradictions"?

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STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Category 3: THE NATURE, PURPOSE, AND DESTINY OF MAN

Definitions

1. What does it mean that man is totally depraved? Why does this matter?
2. What does the sin nature of man mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does sanctification mean? Why does this matter?
4. What does it mean to repent from one's sins? Why does this matter?
5. What does it mean to be "born again?" Why does this matter?
6. What does the resurrection of the body mean? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Do all men have a longing for God?
2. Did a loving God create Hell?
3. Does God hate the sin but love the sinner?
4. Why am I here?

Statement Analysis

1. What is your response to this statement: "Heaven is only a state of mind"?

2. What is your response to the following Martin Sheen quote: "I still believe in the nonviolent Jesus and the basic human goodness present in all of us"? http://progressive.org/mag_intvsheen

3. What is your response to someone who asks you, "Is there life after death?"

4. What is your response to the following Sam Harris quote: "Nearly half of the American population is eagerly anticipating the end of the world. This dewy eyed nihilism provides absolutely no incentives to build a sustainable civilization"? Harris, Sam. *Letter to a Christian Nation*. New York: Random House Inc., 2006

5. How would you respond to someone who states, "Death has never made sense to me. How can a person be there and then just vanish, just not be here?"
   Larry Ellison, Founder of Oracle to biographer Mike Wilson; Washington Post 4/4/2015; article by Ariana Eunjung Cha

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STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Category 4: SALVATION

Definitions

1. What does justification mean? Why does this matter?
2. What does propitiation mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does redemption mean? Why does this matter?
4. What is the meaning of eternal life? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Can a person know God?
2. Can a person become right with God by keeping the Ten Commandments?
3. Does man need salvation?
4. Can a Christian have assurance of his salvation?
5. What will happen to the innocent people who have never heard about Jesus and the Gospel?
6. Are all persons children of God?
7. How many ways are there to heaven?

Statement Analysis

1. What is your response to the statement from Linus (Peanuts, comic strip): "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere"? Schulz, Charles. http://www.ramblingweb.com/search/label/peanuts

2. How would you respond to someone who told you, "I commune best with God when I am out in nature; I don't need organized religion to feel close to God"?

3. How would you respond if someone told you, "Religion is a private personal matter"?

4. How would you respond to John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'"?
   The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV). Crossway 2001

5. What is your response to the popular wisdom, "God helps those who help themselves"?

6. How would you respond to this quote by Rob Bell: "At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church, there have been a number who insist that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins and all will be reconciled to God"?
   Bell, Rob. *Love Wins*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2011

7. What is your response to this criticism: "Christians are all hypocrites. Why would I want to become one of them?"
   http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/ten-most-common-objections-to-christianity-11529850.html/?p=3

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STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Category 5: THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Definitions

1. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is God? Why does this matter?
2. What does the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Mediator? Why does this matter?
4. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Messiah? Why does this matter?
5. What does John 1:1-3 mean when it says that Jesus is the Word? Why does this matter?
6. What does it mean to call Jesus Christ the Lamb of God? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Is the Resurrection essential to the Christian faith?
2. Why is it important that Jesus Christ be both fully God and fully man?
3. Is there evidence for the historical existence of Jesus? Is this evidence necessary for the Christian faith?
4. How do we know that Jesus really died?
5. Is there evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus? Is this evidence necessary for the Christian faith?
6. Is Jesus Christ the Jehovah of the Old Testament?

Statement Analysis

1. How would you respond to the common observation: “Jesus was a good man and a good teacher, but certainly not the Son of God”?

2. If Jesus came so that we may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10), why does it often seem like those who don’t follow Jesus have more fun and enjoyment in this life?

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STOA APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS

Category 6: CHRISTIANITY COMPARED

Definitions

1. Compare and contrast the Biblical view of Jesus with the Islamic view of Jesus.

2. Compare and contrast the Muslim view of God with the Christian view of God.

3. Compare and contrast the origins of the Quran and the origins of the Bible.

4. Compare and contrast the Hindu view of the nature of man with the Christian view of the nature of man.

5. Compare and contrast the book of Mormon's Jesus with that of the Bible.

6. Compare and contrast the Christian view of man's destiny with that of Buddhism.

General Questions

1. Is the environmental movement in conflict with Christianity?

2. Are Christians intolerant?

3. Is transcendental meditation in conflict with Christianity?

4. Is karma a Biblical concept?

5. Do Christians, Jews, and Muslims worship the same God?

6. Are Jehovah's Witnesses Christian?

7. Are Mormons Christians?

8. What are unique features of Christianity that set it apart from all other religions of the world?

Statement Analysis

1. Respond to this quote from the Quran, Surah 28:67: "However, the one who has repented in this life, and believed, and done good deeds may hope to be among those who will achieve salvation."
   http://www.alim.org/library/quran/surah/english/28/MAL

2. Respond to the following Richard Dawkins statement: "Religious fanatics want people to switch off their own minds, ignore the evidence, and blindly follow a holy book based upon private revelation." Dawkins, Richard. The God Delusion. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006

3. Respond to this statement by Buddha: "No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path." Translation of Dhammapada. No. 165. *Karma: A Story of Buddhist Ethics*. Chicago: Carus Publishing Co. 1984

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